



Executive Summary

Renewal of Licensure

Abu Dhabi Polytechnic

September 15-19, 2019

A Re-Licensure Review Team (hereafter RLRT) visited Abu Dhabi Polytechnic (ADPoly) from September 15-19, 2019 to evaluate its Self-Study for Renewal of Licensure. The exit briefing was held on September 19, 2019.

ADPoly was established by the Institute of Applied Technology (IAT) in 2010 to offer applied engineering programs to produce technologists and engineers to serve the UAE industrial manpower required for Abu Dhabi Economic Vision 2030. The IAT was founded in 2005 through decree of His Highness Sheikh Khalifa Bin Zayed Al Nahyan, President of the UAE, Ruler of Abu Dhabi. The establishment of the IAT was an initiative of Sheikh Mohamed Bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi to provide the required qualified manpower to the emerging technological industries.

In November 2012, ADPoly merged with Al Ain International Aviation Academy. The Al Ain campus has been operational since 2009. Currently, ADPoly offers eight programs; five in Abu Dhabi, including Electromechanical Engineering Technology, Advanced Energy Engineering Technology, Information Security Engineering Technology, Petroleum Engineering Technology, and Meteorology Science; and three in Al Ain, including, Aircraft Engineering Technology, Aircraft Maintenance Technology, and Air Traffic Management. There were 1530 students in Abu Dhabi and in Al Ain campuses enrolled at the institution during spring 2019, of which 35% are females. In addition, there are 120 students classified as inactive students. The total number of full-time faculty members is 126 (56 PhD and 63 MS and Lab specialists), with an institution-wide faculty to student ratio of 1:13.

Through its consideration of ADPoly's *Self-Study* submitted for Renewal of Licensure, examination of other documentation, and interaction with faculty, students and others, the RLRT identified many strengths, including the following:

- The applied nature of ADPoly's program offerings addresses critical manpower needs for the UAE;
- The laboratory facilities and physical resources for the PET program in Abu Dhabi and the aviation program in Al Ain are impressive. The soon-to-be-completed PET pilot

plant facility will be the envy of leading petroleum and chemical engineering programs around the world; and

- The hard-working, conscientious, and enthusiastic faculty, who are genuinely interested in the welfare and success of their students, despite their excessive workloads.

The most of the critical matters which need addressing to bring the institution into full compliance with the *Standards* can be grouped into four thematic areas:

- Understaffing and Turnover in the QA/IE Unit. The recent turnover and chaos in the QA/IE office is a matter of concern. Currently, there is only one staff member (a recent hire who currently serves at Al Ain campus) in the QA/IE unit serving the needs of both campuses. The numerous errors and inconsistencies in institutional documents identified in various sections of this review, and the delays in securing Commission for Academic Accreditation (CAA) re-accreditation of several programs point to the chronic understaffing and inadequate support of the QA/IE office. ADPoly must ensure that its QA/IE office is fully supported with human and fiscal resources as required by Section 2.1.2 of the *Standards*. To that end, ADPoly is required to prepare and provide to CAA a timed and resourced hiring plan to fully staff the QA/IE unit, and demonstrate that the staffing levels in the hiring plan will fully meet the QA/IE needs of both campuses.
- Faculty Workloads and Qualifications. Current workloads for many faculty members are excessive, and often exceed the limits specified in Section 4.9.3 of the *Standards*. Faculty are not compensated for teaching overloads. The high teaching loads are counter to ADPoly's goal of increasing its research output and visibility, inasmuch as it affects the faculty's ability to engage in research and the institution's ability to attract and retain outstanding research-active faculty. The majority of faculty members simply do not have the time to be innovative, develop new teaching methods and learning materials; prepare comprehensive course files; provide meaningful advice to students, and engage in effective research. Additionally, the qualifications of some faculty members teaching high-level courses in baccalaureate programs do not meet the requirements of Stipulation 8 of the *Standards*, as well as CAA's expectation that at least 60% of the faculty in vocational programs must hold terminal degrees. Additional faculty must be hired to ensure effective delivery of all programs, while meeting the workload limits and qualifications requirements specified in the *Standards*. It is recognized that addressing these shortfalls will require significant time and resources. Nevertheless, it is CAA's expectation that all programs will be fully compliant with the *Standards* in less than three years. Hence, ADPoly is required to; provide timed and resourced action plans for the hiring of additional faculty to support all programs over the next three years; demonstrate that such plans will bring all programs into compliance with the workload limits and qualifications requirements of the *Standards*; and provide to CAA annual progress reports for each of the next three years demonstrating steady progress toward reaching the targets specified in the action plans for all programs.
- Course Files and Closure of the Continuous Improvement Cycle: The *Standards* require institutions to maintain course files for each offering of each course, which meet the requirements specified in Stipulation 7. Review of samplings of course files for courses

offered during 2018-2019 indicate that many course files do not meet the requirements of the *Standards*. Most important, there is no evidence that the course-level continuous improvement cycle is being closed, and/or appropriately documented. ADPoly must ensure that all course files meet the requirements of the *Standards*. It is important to keep in mind that maintaining course files is not an “*end in-and-of itself*,” instead, it is the means by which institutions can ensure that continuous improvement at the course level is systematically implemented, and that the Course Learning Outcomes, and hence, the Program Learning Outcomes are achieved.

- Physical Safety Concerns: Several safety issues were observed during the campus tour. These include: Inadequate access to (and rapid egress from) some facilities and laboratories for disabled students in wheelchairs; absence of visible signage for access to safety equipment and instructions for actions required during an emergency; absence of safety cabinets for flammable solvents; absence of fume hoods connected to efficient ventilation; and lack of enforcement of safety requirements such as wearing of lab coats and goggles (instructor and students observed in a laboratory with such requirement were non-compliant). ADPoly must ensure proper signage and safety compliance for all its laboratories.

The RLRT makes its requirements and suggestions in a spirit of constructive engagement, with the aim of ensuring that the *Standards* are met, and to aid ADPoly to receive Re-Licensure. Our requirements and suggestions can, and should, be viewed as “Opportunities for Improvement” as ADPoly progresses towards excellence in education, research, and service.